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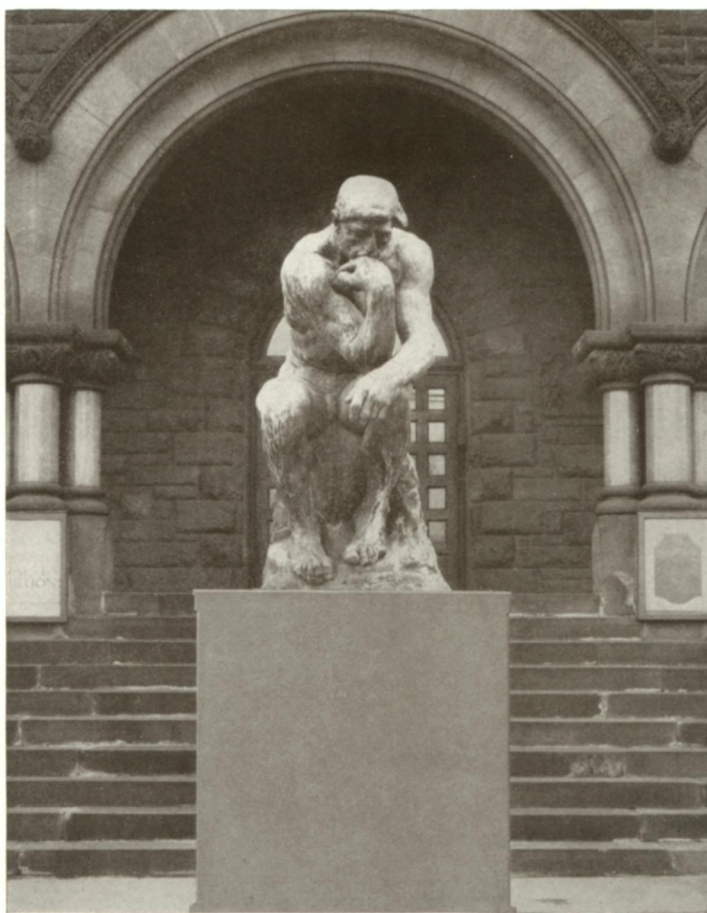
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"LE PENSEUR," BY AUGUSTE RODIN
ANONYMOUSLY GIVEN

RODIN'S "LE PENSEUR" GIVEN

One of the early originals of Auguste Rodin's "Le Penseur," "The Thinker," has been presented as an anonymous gift, and this heroic bronze figure now commands the approach to the Museum. It is one of the earliest examples of this fine subject, executed under the personal direction of Rodin and during its sojourn for a number of years in an important collection of Switzerland it has taken on a patina of unusual loveliness, which only time and the elements can give to a bronze. Like all great art, it enhances its present site, and will probably be similarly located in front of the facade of the new building on Woodward Avenue.

Rodin is now considered as the logical follower after the French Carpeaux, Rude and Houdon, and the third greatest sculptor, following after Phidias and Michelangelo. He has influenced more sculptors than all others since his time.

Like all truly great artists he had an open mind, learning from the Far East, Egypt, Mexico, Italy and France of the Eighteenth Century. He had been the "ghost" for many of the master sculptors in his youth, helping them with their commissions. In this way he was slave to no one master or school, but picked up that which had been found worth while by many.

He travelled in Italy, studying the works of Michelangelo, and the

more realistic Italian, Donatello. Searching about in France he had soon filled his note book with sketches and appreciations of the Cathedrals, upon which subject he published the book "Cathedrals of France."

The bronze, "Man with the Broken Nose," was refused by the Salon in 1864. In 1877 "The Age of Bronze" was accepted for exhibition, after it had been unjustly challenged as a cast taken from a living model. This charge, however, indicates his first manner, that of naturalism.

In the second period of his work he went on toward the impressionistic, laying emphasis on light and shade, rhythmic movement and finally on concentrated well balanced forms, which could be viewed advantageously from any position. It is this second period which is the greater.

The "Portal of Hell" commissioned in 1880 for the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, which occupied the sculptor for 20 years, were never completed. It was to have interpreted the history of the world, with all its struggle and unattained efforts, from the time of Adam. It was in a way to have been a plastic crystallization of the entire Dantesque tragedy. Had the door been carried out according to the proportions of "The Thinker," which was to have been the crowning feature, it would have been one hundred feet high. The artist thought in terms of detail

rather than of the general design. For this reason, although many of the parts were completed, the dream was never realized in its entirety. The forms have the same nervous tension, the same spirit of the dramatic, the same rhythm as Michelangelo's.

"The Thinker" is strongly reminiscent of the Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel or the Lorenzo de Medici of the Medici tombs in Florence. In it as in them there is complete unity. "The Thinker," in its unfinished surface, is the greatest of all of this group. The greatest artists realize that they are unable to completely represent their great thoughts, and would rather suggest than photographically portray.

Auguste Rodin sought the inner significance and not the superficial. The way in which this form is twisted about recalls the asymmetrical balance, that was a great advance over the stiff Byzantine manner. The play of light and shade clearly defines his feeling for design in depth as well as in height and width. The simplicity illustrates a desire for directness and effectiveness of message. Finally the dignity, monumentality and repose interprets the spirit of his art.

Rodin was buried by the ruins of the Chateau D'Issy, where a replica of this same statue towers above his remains as if guarding them.

R. P.

MUSEUM NOTES

Wilhelm R. Valentiner of the Detroit Institute of Arts staff, in the office of expert and adviser, has been actively engaged in his duties in Detroit. He has been installing new accessions. These comprise a great many pieces of old sculpture and painting; fine old furniture, fabrics and objects connected with Christian worship. The 14th to the 17th centuries are the periods represented.

The Detroit Institute of Arts has been the recipient of a well known piece of sculpture by one of the early Americans. "The Lost Pleiad" by Randolph Rogers, (1825-1892) is the subject of this gift, and the donor is

Mrs. Sherman L. Depew. Born in Waterloo, New York, Randolph Rogers spent his young manhood in business at Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Campus Martius, Detroit, is one of his works.

The Detroit Museum of Art Founder's Society has presented to the Print Department, a lithograph by Charles Storm van Gravsande, "The Inner Harbor, Hamburg." The newly acquired print, purchased from the Charles L. Freer Fund, has the simplicity and the feeling for carefully wrought detail that we find in all the work of this Dutch artist.